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Norwegian Graphics

An Arts Council exhibition

Edvard Munch The lonely ones. (Cat. No. 38)

Norwegian Graphics

An Arts Council exhibition 1968-1969

This exhibition of a selection of graphic work by Norwegian artists has been arranged by the Office of Cultural Relations in Norway for the Arts Council and recalls the exhibition of prints by Munch which was circulated in England in 1964.

The exhibition has already been shown in Kirkwall, Orkney, and follows a larger exhibition of Norwegian painting and sculpture at the Camden Art Centre, London earlier this year.

We are most grateful to Mr. Hans Aanestad, the Cultural Attaché of the Norwegian Embassy in London, for all the help he has given us, and to Mr. John Boulton Smith, for his introduction to the catalogue.

Gabriel White

Foreword

The great pioneer and moving spirit behind Norwegian graphic art was Edvard Munch (1863-1944). One might say that he overshadowed many of his contemporaries with his powerful creative force, throughout a long and rich artistic life.

At the turn of the century printmaking was not at all usual in Norway and most of the artists concerned with it were either painters or sculptors. In 1910 the Association of Norwegian Printmakers was formed to look after the interests of printmakers, and today printmaking in Norway is placed on the same footing as painting and sculpture.

After the end of the Second World War – from 1946 onwards – Norwegian printmaking really began to flourish. A line of artists engaged exclusively in this form of art sprang up and by means of exhibitions both at home and abroad the public was made aware of printmaking as an art form in its own right. It was especially through colour wood-cuts and colour lithographs, often large scale, that Norwegian printmaking made its mark during these years. One can say that many of these artists were influenced by Munch, both technically and in choice of subject, but it is not correct to say that Munch founded a "school" in Norway.

During the last twenty years Norwegian printmaking has increased greatly, keeping in step with developments elsewhere in the world. Many Norwegian printmakers go abroad after finishing their education and Copenhagen and Paris (Atelier 17) have had an important influence on many of the younger artists. Although it can still be said that Norwegian printmaking is inspired and influenced by nature there are also artists who work in a more abstract form.

The selection shown in this exhibition in Great Britain gives a good cross-section of printmaking in Norway from Edvard Munch to the present day. The oldest living artist who is represented is Henrik Finne, and one can follow the development to the youngest – Trond Botnen and Reidar Rudjord.

We thank the Arts Council of Great Britain for the invitation which has made this exhibition possible.

Einar C. Hatlen
Chairman,
Association of Norwegian
Printmakers.

Introduction

After many years during which little contemporary Norwegian art was seen in this country, it is a pleasure this year to have two important exhibitions. The exhibition in London and Newcastle this spring showed work in most media and it is interesting to have this supplemented by one composed wholly of graphic work. Only two of the artists here were represented on the earlier occasion.

As one might expect from the strong graphic tradition in northern Europe, Norway has produced some distinguished printmakers from Munch onwards. During the 1890s, when the revolution in techniques and aims of graphic art were starting to create the modern print, Munch was at the centre of activity, Paris. From his contact with the work of such artists as Gauguin, Toulouse-Lautrec, Bonnard and Vallotton he evolved his own very important contribution, particularly striking in his coloured woodcuts and lithographs. Four of his prints here come from that crucial decade; they are of themes on the human condition, related to his "Life Frieze", which Munch described as "a poem on life, love and death".

Apart from the influence of his work on Munch, Gauguin had other particular connections with Scandinavia, through his Danish wife. One of their sons, Pola, has played an important part in Norwegian writing on art and their grandson, Paul René Gauguin is a leading artist, represented by five works in this exhibition. Paul René Gauguin is self-taught as a printmaker, having started with woodcuts in Spain in 1936. His work is sometimes lyrical, sometimes witty and it can also reveal atmospheric fantasy. His use of graphic techniques is inventive and sure.

The other artists all received their initial training in Norway, although most of them supplemented this by further study abroad. The oldest of them, Henrick Finne has travelled widely and he is represented in a number of European galleries. His subjects, however, are most frequently of typically Norwegian people and scenes and he has been particularly successful in his colour woodcuts. Bjarne Brunsvik, represented here by colour lithographs, has found his inspiration in scenes of town and countryside.

Norwegian artists have had strong connections with Paris for many years and four of those here have worked at S.W. Hayter's Atelier 17. The oldest of the four, Finn Christensen, has exhibited widely in Europe and America. Apart from his graphic work he is a painter and has carried out some distinguished murals in Norway. Others are Olaf Thrap-Meyer, Reidar Rudjord and Anne Breivik, and understandably all have been particularly interested in branches of etching technique. Both Thrap-Meyer and Rudjord have nature as their starting point, whereas Anne Breivik, (whose work has already been seen in England this year) creates suggestive images not directly inspired by natural objects.

Eystein Sigurdsson also made part of his studies in France. Represented here by drypoints and colour woodcuts, his subjects are drawn sometimes from Norwegian nature, sometimes from fantasy. Ottar Helge Johannessen, one of the few to study in Britain rather than France, takes people and objects for themes in his colour woodcuts. The youngest artist, Trond Botnen, (who was also represented here earlier this year) has gradually moved from figurative art to near-abstraction. His work is atmospheric, suggestive and sometimes witty. For some years he worked in black and white, but has more recently added colour to his skillfully wrought etchings.

It is good to have the opportunity of seeing Norwegian prints in this country. We can hope that such occasions as this exhibition will increase awareness of each other's art on both sides of the North Sea.

John Boulton Smith

Trond Botnen

Born 1937.

Studied at art schools in Oslo and Copenhagen.

One man exhibitions: 1964 Copenhagen, 1965 Galleri Marya; 1967 Oslo, Galleri Haaken; 1967 Bergen Picture Gallery.

Participated in collective exhibitions in Norway and in Ljubljana; São Paulo, Bienal 1963; Vienna – Albertina 1963; Lugano; Tokyo, Biennale 1966; Paris.

Collections include: National Gallery, Oslo; Riksgalleriet; Bergen Picture Gallery; Stockholm.

1.	Heroic suite	1966	Etching
2.	Hero's head	1966	"
3.	Lying down	1967	"
4.	Landscape	1967	Colour etching
5.	Study	1967	Etching

Anne Breivik

Born 1932.

Studied at the State School of Arts and Crafts, Oslo, 1949-52; Académie Notre-Dame des Champs, Paris 1960; Atelier 17, Paris 1960-63 and 1964. Founded the printmaking workshop Atelier Nord in Oslo, 1963.

One man exhibitions: 1964 Oslo, Artists Federation; Trondheim, Art Association; 1965 Copenhagen, Erling Haghfelt Gallery; Larvik, Art Association; 1966 Paris, Galerie Le Raneiagh; 1967, Oslo, Lille Galleri (paintings).

Participated in collective exhibitions: Yugoslavia, Biennale de la Gravure, Ljubljana 1965 and 1967; U.S.A., Northwest Printmakers International Exhibition, Seattle 1966; Paris, Salon de Mai 1966 and 1967; Poland, Biennale de la Gravure, Cracow 1966; Paris, Biennale des Jeunes 1967; Italy, Premio Internationale Biella per l'Incisione 1967; and in Japan, Canada, Scandinavia, France, Venezuela, Argentina, Brazil, Belgium, Holland, Great Britain and Ireland.

Collections include: Oslo, National Gallery; Riksgalleriet; Copenhagen, State Museum for Art; London, Victoria and Albert Museum; Dublin, Arts Council; Paris, Bibliotèque Nationale; Brussels, Bibliotèque Royale; Brazil, Museu de Arte Contemporânea, São Paulo; Yugoslavia, Museum of Modern Art, Skopje; City collections of Aarhus, Larvik and Trondheim.

6.	Old missile	1964	Etching
7.	Stranger	1963/64	Drypoint
8.	Depart	1966	"
9.	No escape	1966	Engraving
10.	Eclat	1967	Engraving

Bjarne Brunsvik

Born 1913.

Educated at the State Handicraft and Art School and the State Academy of Fine Arts with Professor Axel Revold. Individual exhibitions in Oslo and Copenhagen. Collective exhibitions in Stockholm, Copenhagen, Reykjavik, Paris and New York. Studied in Italy, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden. Represented in the Travelling Art Gallery and several other Norwegian public permanent collections.

11.	Shipyard	1957	Colour lithograph
12.	View from studio, Prague	1966	"
13.	Sun over a town	1966	"
14.	Dunes, Jæren	1966	"
15.	Flat landscape	1966	"

Finn Christensen

Born 1929.

Educated at the State Academy of Fine Arts, Oslo and Atelier 17, Paris. Individual exhibitions in Oslo and Copenhagen. Collective exhibitions in several European countries and in Washington, Vancouver, São Paulo and Tokyo. Studied in Paris. Represented in the National Gallery, Oslo, the National Museum in Stockholm, the Bergen Picture Gallery, the Travelling Art Gallery, the Art Museums in Gothenburg and Lund, the State Museum in Copenhagen and the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Murals in the Norwegian Broadcasting House, Oslo, the Chapel of the Dominican Convent and the State Hospital. Honorary member of the Accademia delle Arti del Disegno, Florence.

16.	Mysticism	1963	Etching
17.	Brokker I	1963	„
18.	Birds	1964	Drypoint
19.	Brokker II	1965	Etching
20.	A poet's residence	1966	„

Henrik Finne

Born 1898.

Educated at the State Handicraft and Art School, the State Academy of Fine Art, with André Lhôte in Paris and with Rolf Nesch. Exhibited at the Salon d'Automne in Paris, 1921, and the State Arts Exhibition in Oslo, 1945. Studied in the Antarctic, France, Netherlands, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Czechoslovakia and the Soviet Union. Represented in the National Gallery; the Bergen Picture Gallery; the Stavanger Permanent Gallery; the National Museum, Stockholm; the Museum of Art, Gothenburg, Malmø and Copenhagen; the Gemeente museum, the Hague; Ateneum, Helsinki; Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the Pushkin Museum, Moscow, as well as the Travelling Art Gallery, of Norway. Honorary member of the Academia delle Arti del Disegno, Florence.

21.	10th September	1944	Colour woodcut
22.	Seated nude	1947	"
23.	Professor Leiv Kreyberg	1955	"
24.	Buongiorno	1958	"
25.	March winter	1962	"

Paul René Gauguin

Born 1911.

Largely self-taught. Début 1936. Studied in France and Spain. Represented in National Gallery, Oslo, Bergen Picture Gallery, National Museum, Stockholm, State Museum of Art, Copenhagen. Very versatile artist – worked as book illustrator – designer for the theatre – interiors of hotels (e.g. The Viking, Oslo) and ships (the Norwegian coastal vessel "Nordstjernen" and the German tourist ship "Die Bunte Kuh").

26.	Cock	1949	Colour wood-cut
27.	Barcelona	1958	Etching
28.	Olive trees	1958	Gravure au sable
29.	The witch	1959	Aquatint
30.	The tree	1959	Colour wood-cut

Ottar Helge Johannessen

Born 1929.

Studied at the State School of Arts and Crafts, Oslo, and The State Academy of Art, Oslo.

One man exhibition in Oslo in 1954 and later in several other Norwegian towns.

Participated in collective exhibitions in U.S.A., Asia and in most European countries.

Grant from Oslo town; the Houen, Finne, Hamsun and Munch Legacies.

Study trips to: Holland, Eire, England and Scotland.

Collections include: National Gallery, Oslo; Riksgalleriet; State Museum for Art, Copenhagen; Oregon State University, U.S.A.; Galleri Numero, Florence; Kristiansand's Picture Gallery and several Arts Associations' permanent galleries.

31.	The balloon man	1965	Woodcut
32.	The woman, the old man and the clown	1965	"
33.	The mirror	1965	"
34.	White fence	1966	"
35.	The striped suit	1967	"

Edvard Munch

(1863-1944)

Born in Løyten, Norway, but brought up in Christiania (present-day Oslo.) During his childhood, his mother and sister died, and many of his mature works refer back to this period.
1889. His first important exhibition in Oslo. Awarded a State Scholarship.
1889-1892. Spent in Paris.
1892-1908. Spent mainly in Germany, where he exhibited widely. At this time, he started his graphic work, firstly etchings and later, during winter visits to Paris, turning to lithography and woodcuts.
1908-1909. Had a nervous breakdown and had treatment in Copenhagen for some months.
1909. Returned to Norway where he worked until his death in 1944. Although he was reluctant to part with his paintings, he exhibited throughout Europe. Was awarded in 1933, the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Olav.
In his will, Munch left his entire collection of works to the City of Oslo. They are now housed in the Munch Museum, Oslo.

36.	Consolation	1894	Etching
37.	Attraction II	1895	"
38.	The lonely ones – Two human beings	1895	"
39.	Kiss	1895	"
40.	The nurse	1909	"

Reidar Rudjord

Born 1930.

Educated at the State Handicraft and Art School, the State Academy of Fine Arts, Oslo, Accademia delle Belle Arti, Florence, and Atelier 17, Paris. Individual exhibitions in Oslo and Bergen. Participated in collective exhibitions at home and abroad. Studied in Italy, Netherlands and France. Represented in the National Gallery, the Travelling Art Gallery and Oregon State University, U.S.A. Won the Norwegian Printmakers' Prize in 1959.

41.	Lista	1965	Etching/colour print
42.	Mother earth	1965	"
43.	Bog	1965	"
44.	April	1965	"
45.	March	1966	"

Eystein Sigurdsson

Born 1925

Educated at the State Handicraft and Art School and the State Academy of Fine Arts. Individual exhibitions in Oslo. Participated in several collective exhibitions at home and abroad. Studied in Denmark, Germany, France and Spain. Represented in the National Gallery and Lillehammer Art Collection. Won an international prize in Lugano in 1960.

46.	Stabbur II (Storehouse)	1963	Drypoint
47.	Trees	1963	"
48.	In the mountains	1966	Colour wood-cut
49.	A fable	1967	"
50.	Fantasy	1968	"

Olaf Thrap-Meyer

Born 1922.

Educated at the State Handicraft and Art School, the State Academy of Fine Arts and Atelier 17, Paris. Individual exhibitions in Oslo, Bergen and Copenhagen. Participated in several collective exhibitions at home and abroad. Studied in Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands, Belgium, Yugoslavia, England and the Scandinavian countries. Represented in the National Gallery, the Travelling Art Gallery, the Bergen Picture Gallery and the Oregon State Gallery.

51.	Harbour	1961	Etching
52.	By the window	1962	„
53.	Middle age	1963	„
54.	Hamburg at night	1964	Colour etching
55.	Felter	1966	Etching

A list of Arts Council publications, including all exhibition catalogues in print, can be obtained from the Publications Department, Arts Council of Great Britain, 105 Piccadilly, London W.1.

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